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Another approach to offering the user of, for example, a video transmission service a bandwidth requested by the user for the transmission of data packets is disclosed by US Patent Application 5,732,078.

5 This discloses an arrangement of an access node to the Internet that assures a bandwidth requested by the user for the transmission of data packets by re-routing data packets onto an alternate network. The re-routing of the data packets is thereby undertaken as follows:

10 When a user requests a specific bandwidth for the transmission of data packets from his user terminal device to a destination node, the access node to which the user terminal device is connected sets up a point-to-point connection to the access node to which the destination node is connected via the alternate network offering the requested bandwidth.

15 For re-routing the data packets for whose transmission the user requests an assured bandwidth onto the alternate network, an existing routing table in the access node to which the user terminal device is connected is finally modified such that, in addition to containing the respective destination addresses of the nodes to which data packets are respectively forwarded, it also contains the source addresses of the data packets to be re-routed due to a quality requested by the user. According to a modification of the appertaining, known method, a connection-individual or, 20 respectively, transmission-individual particular ("application port number") is additionally entered into said routing table.

25 On the basis of the additionally stored source address and, potentially, the aforementioned connection-individual or, respectively, transmission-individual particular ("application port number") in the routing table, the data packets arriving at such an access node can be selected according to whether they are routed over the ordinary Internet or via the alternate network.

This method is very involved since a separate connection via the alternate network must be set up for every transmission of data packets with a requested bandwidth that is initiated by a user.

5 Additionally, the routing table must be modified in every access node to which user terminal devices are connected, namely after every transmission of data packets with a specific bandwidth initiated by a user.

Also to be considered as further outlay is that all data packets incoming at such an access node are investigated for their source address and, potentially, the
10 aforementioned connection-individual or, respectively, transmission-individual particular ("application port number"), with reference whereto a re-routing onto the alternate network can be initiated.

Finally, it is also known (Gung-Chou Lai, Ruay-Shiung Chang, "Support Qos in IP over ATM", Master Thesis [Online], June 1997 (1997-06), National Taiwan
15 University of Science and technology, Taipei, Taiwan) that a determination regarding the path via which a data packet is to be routed in a switching system can be made in the switching system on the basis of a field TOS (type of service) in the header of data packets to be switched or, respectively, to be transmitted. This measure, however, has nothing to do with a re-routing of data packets of a packet-switching network onto at
20 least one alternate network; on the contrary, the data switchings or, respectively, transmissions here respectively ensue in one and the same switching system.

The object of the invention is therefore comprised in developing a method of the species indicated in the preamble of patent claim 1 to the effect that it can be implemented with optimally little outlay and with the slightest possible effect on its
25 environment.

The object is achieved by the features recited in the characterizing part of claim 1.

The principle of the invention is comprised in re-routing data packets of a packet-switching network for whose transmission between their source node and their destination a specific quality is requested onto at least one alternate network that
5 assures such a requested quality. This re-routing is inventively achieved in that the data packets to be routed via an alternate network are respectively identified in their source node only by a bit pattern known to the access node connected to the source node either directly or indirectly via at least one intermediate node. Upon arrival of such data packets in such an access node, the known bit patterns are respectively
10 recognized only as a result thereof, and a re-routing of the data packets identified with the known bit patterns onto an alternate network is initiated.

A critical advantage of the inventive method is to be seen therein that the table present in an access node connected to such a source node for determining the traffic paths (routing table) remains unaffected by ongoing modifications for the re-
15 routing of the data packets for whose transmission a specific quality has been requested.

It has also proven advantageous when data packets need be investigated for the known bit pattern only in the access node connected to a source node.

The invention is additionally characterized in that the traffic flow of the
20 ordinary packet-switching network is not negatively affected by the re-routing of the data packets for whose transmission a requested quality is to be assured with the assistance of the inventively simple selection according to a known bit pattern.

Further developments of the invention are recited in subclaims.

According to an advantageous development of the invention, the data
25 packets arriving in an access node directly or indirectly connected to a source node